



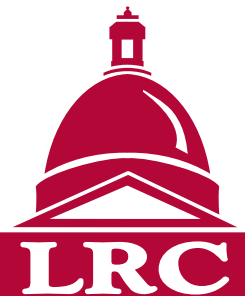
# Inside the Legislative Research Commission



**Legislative Research Commission**

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**Legislative  
Research  
Commission**





# **Inside the Legislative Research Commission**

November 2004

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Research  
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**LRC**





## **Legislative Research Commission**

### **Foreword**

Of the three branches of state government, the legislative branch is the one closest to the people because citizens elect legislators from their communities to be their voice in Frankfort. Learning how the legislative branch functions is helpful in understanding its role in state government as a whole.

The Legislative Research Commission serves as the administrative and research arm of the General Assembly. Its staff is composed of a diverse group of people who bring a wealth of knowledge to the process of helping the state's lawmakers make decisions regarding the future of Kentucky.

This publication is intended to give citizens a better understanding of the role the Legislative Research Commission plays in state government.

Robert Sherman  
Director

Frankfort, Kentucky  
November 2004

## Telephone

A legislator's office may be contacted any time during normal business hours by calling LRC at (502) 564-8100.

People with hearing and speech impairments may use the toll-free Kentucky Relay Service by calling 1-800-648-6056.

LRC sets up toll-free telephone numbers for citizens to use to leave a message for legislators and to determine meeting schedules. During legislative sessions, an additional toll-free number is available to determine bill status. Spanish-language operators also are available during legislative sessions. The numbers are posted on the LRC Web page and across the state by the media.

## E-mail

All legislators have e-mail addresses that can be accessed on the Web page at <lrc.ky.gov>.



Statutory committees perform specific tasks related to oversight of the executive branch.

## On the Web

LRC hosts a Web site at <lrc.ky.gov> that contains information on members, committees and committee meeting schedules, the legislative process, contacting your legislator, bill status, and available publications.



Interim joint committees may draft and approve bills to be prefiled for the next session.

## Contacting Legislators

Kentucky's is a representative government with legislators elected by their peers to speak for them in government. Input from citizens is vital to the legislative process.

## Letters

Receiving letters from constituents is an effective way for legislators to learn the support of or opposition to issues. It is helpful for letters to specifically identify the bill supported or opposed. A letter should discuss only one issue, if possible. The name and mailing address of the letter writer should be included. The names and mailing addresses of legislators may be obtained on the LRC Web page or by contacting the LRC Public Information Office.

## History

Kentucky became the second state to create a legislative service agency when it formed the Legislative Council in 1936. However, lack of funds and staff made the council ineffective, and it was abolished in 1948 when the General Assembly created the Legislative Research Commission (LRC) as its nonpartisan fact-finding and service body. Under Chapter 7 of the Kentucky Revised Statutes, the Commission operates as the administrative and research arm of the General Assembly.



LRC was created in 1948 by the General Assembly.

LRC is governed by a 16-member committee made up of the Democratic and Republican leadership of the House and the Senate. This committee is statutorily designated as the "Legislative Research Commission." Both the staff of the General Assembly and its governing body are referred to as "LRC."

Originally, the governor served as chair of LRC. The chair later passed to the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. In 1992, a constitutional amendment passed that removes the lieutenant governor as President of the Senate and requires that a member of the Senate be elected as president of that body. The Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate serve as co-chairs of LRC.

The Commission also directs the business of the legislature between sessions of the General Assembly.

# LRC Professional Support Staff

Although it goes by one name, the Legislative Research Commission refers to two entities: legislative leadership and staff.

The legislative leadership is the 16-member committee of Democratic and Republican leaders of each chamber, while the staff is comprised of both partisan and nonpartisan employees. Partisan staff serve the legislative leadership of either chamber and serve at their pleasure. Nonpartisan staff serve the entire legislature and report to the LRC director.

LRC employs a nonpartisan director who oversees a professional staff of researchers, fiscal analysts, librarians, secretaries, attorneys, computer operators, and other trained specialists who provide a multitude of services for the General Assembly. LRC staff draft legislation at the request of any legislative member.

Nonpartisan staff also conduct research and investigations, maintain official legislative records, revise Kentucky's statutes to reflect new legislation, and provide support staff to legislative committees.

There are many functions necessary to help legislators conduct the business of the legislative branch of state government. LRC has its own print shop to print bills, research reports, and informational publications. LRC also maintains a



LRC is the nonpartisan fact-finding and service body of the General Assembly.

*Statutory Committees* provides a summary of the proposals discussed and acted upon by each committee during the interim.

- *Issues Confronting the General Assembly* is a collection of reports on the major topics that are likely to receive attention during the regular session.

## Public Services



### Legislative Reference Library

The Peggy King Legislative Reference Library provides

materials that support the research activities of LRC. The LRC library has holdings of more than 4,000 volumes, 300 periodicals, and video and audio collections that help legislators and staff with their work. The library is located in the Capitol Annex and is open to the public.

The “interim” is the time between regular sessions of the General Assembly.

### Educational Materials

LRC provides school students and teachers with materials that can help them better understand the legislative process. Teachers can also arrange to bring their classes to visit the Capitol. Contact the Public Information office for more information.



Some of the informational publications prepared and distributed by LRC are listed below.

- The *Legislative Record* shows the daily status of all bills and resolutions when the General Assembly is in session. Final executive action on each bill also is recorded. Between sessions, the *Interim Legislative Record* is published monthly and provides information about the Commission and interim committees.
- The *Legislative Calendar* is a weekly e-mail notice of committee meetings during the interim.
- The *Kentucky General Assembly Directory* is published before each session and has a picture and a brief biography of each legislator.
- *Kentucky Acts* contains all bills enacted during a session.
- The *House Journal* and the *Senate Journal* are the official daily records of proceedings in each chamber during a session.
- *General Assembly Action* contains summaries of all bills and resolutions delivered to the governor each session.
- *Administrative Register of Kentucky* is a monthly compilation of regulations proposed by administrative agencies of the Commonwealth and serves as public notice of such proposed regulations.
- *Kentucky Administrative Regulations Service* is published annually and contains regulations enacted by administrative agencies.
- *Final Reports of the Interim Joint, Special, and*

public information office to dispense information to the media and the public about the activities of the General Assembly and its members.



The Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate serve as co-chairs of LRC.

## Research

A major responsibility of LRC is to research issues confronting lawmakers. These research tasks and projects are completed by LRC staff at the request of the General Assembly or by LRC's initiative and can encompass any state program or policy. Any resulting research reports and research memoranda are made available to the public at little or no cost. Many of the research publications also are available on the LRC Web site.

## Budget Review

LRC is directed by statute to study and examine the expenditures of state agencies. For this purpose, the Commission has a budget review staff that examines agency budgets, conducts fiscal studies, and provides data required for effective legislative review of proposals. During General Assembly sessions, budget review staff prepare fiscal notes on the cost implications of pending legislation and work with the Appropriations and Revenue Committees in reviewing the executive budget proposal.

## Office of Education Accountability

The legislature established the Office of Education Accountability (OEA) in 1990 as part of the Kentucky Education Reform Act. OEA is under the jurisdiction of the Legislative

Research Commission with oversight by its Education Assessment and Accountability Review Subcommittee (EAARS). OEA is required to ensure that public schools in Kentucky operate efficiently and effectively. OEA also monitors the implementation of education reform throughout the state and reviews the state's system of school finance. OEA conducts studies relating to public education as directed by EAARS.



The Commission directs the business of the legislature between sessions of the General Assembly.

## Interim Legislative Process

The interim is that period of time between the regular sessions of the General Assembly when interim joint committees are authorized to meet on a monthly basis. The interim period has been statutorily defined to begin on June 1 and continue through December 1 of each year. Interim joint committees are subcommittees of LRC and report to LRC and follow its procedures.

poena witnesses and documents and to require testimony under oath. The committee reports its findings to the state agency involved and to the General Assembly.

## Tobacco Settlement Agreement Fund Oversight Committee

The Tobacco Settlement Agreement Fund Oversight Committee reviews each project being submitted to the Agricultural Development Board for funding from the Tobacco Settlement Fund.

## Special Committees/Task Forces

When necessary, the Legislative Research Commission or the General Assembly authorizes special committees or task forces to study a specific topic and report their findings, usually by a specified date during the interim, to LRC or the General Assembly. Typically, after the study has been completed and reported, the committee or task force ceases to exist.

## LRC Services

### Informational Publications

LRC and its staff prepare a number of informational publications as part of the legislative process. These publications also are available to help citizens learn about and participate more effectively in their state government. For more information about topics and how to get copies, visit the LRC Web site at <lrc.ky.gov>.

was established by the 1990 General Assembly's passage of the Kentucky Education Reform Act.

### **Government Contract Review Committee**

The Government Contract Review Committee reviews proposed state personal service contracts and memoranda of agreement to determine the need for the service, whether the service can be performed by state personnel, and the cost and duration of the contract.

### **Medicaid Oversight and Advisory Committee**

The Medicaid Oversight and Advisory Committee monitors the implementation of Medicaid Managed Care within the Commonwealth, including access to services, utilization of services, quality of services, and cost containment.



Nonpartisan staff serve the entire legislature and report to the LRC director.

### **Program Review and Investigations Committee**

The Program Review and Investigations Committee reviews the operations of state agencies to determine that funds are being spent appropriately and if state programs are effective. The operations, practices, and duties of state agencies are studied as they relate to efficiency in the utilization of space, personnel, equipment, and facilities. The committee has the power to sub-

## **The Interim Committee Structure**


There are three types of committees: interim joint, statutory, and special/task force. Legislators usually serve on three or more committees. LRC staff work with all types of committees.

### **Interim Joint Committees**

The General Assembly meets for a specified number of days in regular session every year. The period between legislative sessions is called the "interim," and a great deal of work continues at this time. During the interim the individual House and Senate standing committees that were organized during the session meet together as interim joint committees to study issues. No laws can be passed during the interim.

Standing committees of both chambers come together to form interim joint committees. For example, the Appropriations and Revenue Committee of the Senate and the Appropriations and Revenue Committee of the House become the Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations and Revenue after the legislative session. This enables a committee to continue studying the issues related to its area and to prepare legislation for introduction at the next session.

Interim joint committees are an important part of the legislative process. They provide an opportunity for in-depth discussion and study without the rush and pressure that exist



LRC employs a nonpartisan director to oversee staff.

during sessions. Interim committee meetings are open to the public so citizens have an opportunity to express views on areas the proposed legislation will affect.

Interim joint committees may draft and approve bills to be prefiled for the next session. Prefiling enables bills to be introduced at the beginning of the session and enables the standing committees to become active immediately.

## Statutory Committees

In addition to interim joint committees, there are other committees that function as subcommittees of the Legislative Research Commission. Statutory committees were established by the General Assembly (by statute) to perform specific tasks related to oversight of the executive branch of state government.



Partisan staff serve the legislative leadership of either chamber and serve at their pleasure.

## Administrative Regulation Review Subcommittee

The Administrative Regulation Review Subcommittee reviews regulations proposed by state administrative bodies. After review by the subcommittee, the Legislative Research Commission refers proposed regulations to an appropriate interim joint committee for further review.

## Capital Planning Advisory Board

The Capital Planning Advisory Board develops in each biennium a comprehensive statewide six-year capital improvements plan and submits it to the heads of the three branches of government. The plan includes recommendations of projects to be undertaken or continued and recommendations as to priority and means of funding such capital projects. The board is composed of 16 members appointed by the three branches of state government.

## Capital Projects and Bond Oversight Committee

The Capital Projects and Bond Oversight Committee monitors implementation of capital projects authorized by the General Assembly or by the committee through an interim review process. The committee reviews any cost overruns on authorized projects and receives quarterly reports from those agencies that manage capital projects. The committee also reviews all bonds issued by state agencies and school systems.

## Education Assessment and Accountability Review Subcommittee

The Education Assessment and Accountability Review Subcommittee reviews administrative regulations and advises the Kentucky Board of Education concerning the implementation of the state system of assessment and accountability. The subcommittee also advises and monitors the Office of Education Accountability (OEA), which